

MINI PHOTO PRINTER

INTRODUCTION

Compact photo printers are perfect if you want to print your snaps quickly and easily at home. Over the past couple of years, they've become increasingly popular and affordable, giving you the freedom to print photos from your PC or directly from a digital camera or memory card. Some of the printers we've looked at have optional battery packs, so you can print photos no matter where you are.

In this *Labs* we've reviewed nine compact photo printers, from the most affordable to the most feature-packed. Most of the printers here have high-quality colour screens, so you can preview and edit your photos before printing. The most advanced models include touch screens, CD writers and Bluetooth support, so you can print pictures directly from your camera phone.

Read on to find the best way to get great photos without the wait.

Kat Orphanides

Printers and
Audio Expert

kat@computershopper.co.uk



INSTANT PRINTS

For a quick, convenient way to print photos, remember the best things come in small packages. We test nine compact printers from just £48



Choosing a... Mini Photo Printer

Compact photo printers let you turn images from your digital camera into 6x4in photos that you can share with others. Most let you edit and customise your photos before you print, making them perfect tools for on-the-spot creativity.

SHOOT AND RUN

Not all compact photo printers use the same printing technology, and they all have different features. Which printer you choose depends on how, and where, you intend to use it. Most printers in the group are portable, with only HP's oddly shaped Photosmart A826 designed to spend its life on a desk. However small and light a printer may be, its portability is limited if you can't use it without a mains power connection. The table on page 91 shows which printers can take an optional battery pack.

All the printers in this *Labs* can print from a PC at their maximum resolution, but this isn't always the case if you want to print directly from a digital camera or a memory card. All except one of the printers in the group have integrated memory card readers, so check that the type in your digital camera is supported.

Most can also print directly from a digital camera using a PictBridge USB connection, although Kodak's

EasyShare G610 doesn't support PictBridge and instead prints directly only from cameras that support the Kodak ImageLink system. Your final option for direct printing is wirelessly over Bluetooth. This is particularly helpful if you want to print photos taken on a mobile phone. Optional Bluetooth adaptors are available for three of the printers in the group, but only Epson's PictureMate 290 comes with Bluetooth built in.

A screen is essential if you want to print from memory cards, as it allows you to preview and adjust your images. All the printers with memory card slots also have screens, ranging in size from 2.5in up to the 7in touchscreen found on HP's Photosmart A826. Most printers let you crop, enhance and manipulate your photos with colour effects, captions and borders, and a big screen makes editing your photos much easier.

INK COMPATIBILITY

Compact photo printers use two very different printing technologies, which is why some printers in the table on page 91 have much lower resolutions than others.

Inkjet photo printers work just like normal A4 inkjets, with a print head that travels across the page from side to side squirting out tiny droplets of ink drawn from a reservoir in the cartridges. The image you



This month

LEXMARK

P350
Page 86



HP

Photosmart A526
Page 86



EPSON

PictureMate 240
Page 86



KODAK

EasyShare G610
Page 87



SONY

DPP-FP70
Page 87



CANON

Selphy ES2
Page 87



SONY

DPP-FP90
Page 88



HP

Photosmart A826
Page 88



EPSON

PictureMate 290
Page 88



see on the page is made up of thousands of tiny dots, and the resolution – the number of printed dots per inch – is a major factor in how clear and sharp printed images will be. For photo printing, you ideally want a resolution of at least 4,800x1,200dpi, although resolutions as low as 1,200x1,200dpi can produce perfectly acceptable snapshots.

Four of the group's photo printers use a different method of getting ink on to the page. Dye-sublimation printing uses a solid dye that is rapidly heated to become a gas without passing through a liquid state. The gaseous dye solidifies as it comes into contact with the photo paper. The dye is stored in a cartridge on a transparent ribbon made up of different-coloured panes: yellow, magenta, cyan and a clear overcoat that protects against moisture and ultra-violet light.

Quoted dye-sub resolutions are lower than those of inkjet printers, but the resulting print looks smooth because dye-sublimation printing completely covers the page in ink, rather than printing dots. However, dye-sub photos can look slightly soft-focus with poor definition on dark colours.

CONSUMABLE CULTURE

Printing your photos at home means you get instant results, but it's never as cost-effective as using an online printing service. In each review, we've listed the typical price you're likely to pay

for packs of consumables, and the price you can expect to pay for each photo.

Most inkjet photo printers use three-colour cartridges that look very similar to those used by full-size inkjets. The Epson printers' cartridges look a little different, and instead of mixing their three colours to produce black they have a dedicated black ink cartridge, which produces more intense dark colours. It's possible to buy ink and paper separately for many photo printers, but the most economical way to buy consumables is in packs that contain both photo paper and a cartridge with sufficient ink to print every sheet.

How we test Mini photo printers

Our testing procedure for compact photo printers is similar to the photo-printing tests we perform on full-sized inkjets. In addition to testing direct-printing features and menu options, we use a standard set of qualitative and quantitative tests.

PRINT QUALITY

We print a set of six colour photos selected to test the printers' ability to accurately reproduce elements such as skin tones, dark colours, low contrast areas and areas of

Dye-sub cartridges are available only in packs with the correct amount of photo paper. They look very different to familiar inkjet cartridges, consisting of a reel that looks like a video tape, on to which are wound the transparent coloured panels that contain the dye.

Regardless of your choice of printing technology, the durability of photos is important. Where available, we've listed figures for how long the photos will last in a frame, along with the source of this data. Wilhelm Imaging Research is regarded as the world standard authority on photo durability, while some manufacturers use their own testing facilities.

subtle shading transitions that require one tone to blend seamlessly into another. We also use a greyscale image to test print quality for black-and-white photos.

PRINT SPEEDS

Because photos are slow to print even on the fastest printer, page per minute (ppm) figures tend to be so low as to be almost meaningless. Instead of calculating these, we state how long it takes each device to print the same six photos.

MINI PHOTO PRINTERS



LEXMARK P350



£48 inc VAT

From www.ameiva.co.uk

Although Lexmark's P350 inkjet photo printer is no longer in production, it's still available to buy. It takes a standard Lexmark colour cartridge and photo paper, so getting replacement consumables shouldn't be a problem. A high-yield Lexmark #43 cartridge should be enough for 100 6x4in prints, but at a steep cost of around 26p per photo. A #45 ink and photo paper pack is also available, which is better value at around 20p per photo.

Driver installation went smoothly, although you may have to disable any anti-virus software you have running before installing the printer. There are plenty of options available if you want to print directly from a memory card, including brightness adjustment, red-eye removal and various borders and preset colour effects. Unfortunately, images could only be viewed and selected one at a time, and data from our SD card was read frustratingly slowly. The menus include an option to enable Bluetooth, but this is an optional extra.

Print speeds were fairly quick at 10 minutes and 14 seconds for six 6x4in prints, but print quality was the worst in the group. Dark images were murky, while brighter colours were oversaturated. All our prints suffered from a distinct purple sheen, which was particularly visible when they caught the light, and the ink failed to dry completely, coming off on our hands even after several hours had passed. Pictures got stuck to each other and were damaged when we tried to detach them, and the ink ran off the page when we accidentally spilled a drop of water on one of our photos.

The P350 is easy to use and inexpensive to buy. It supports direct printing at its highest resolution of 4,800x1,200dpi, and it's small and portable with a sturdy carrying handle. It might be a good printer to use on the move without having to worry about damaging expensive equipment, but the lack of any battery option is limiting. With such poor print quality, it's impossible to recommend the P350.

SUMMARY

- ☒ Inexpensive
- ☒ Poor image quality
- ☒ Ink dries slowly and is easily damaged

THREE-COLOUR INKJET COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER
6x4in photo support, 4,800x1,200dpi maximum resolution, USB Hi-Speed, PictBridge USB interfaces, CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro, xD memory card support
PART CODE 0022W0002
DETAILS www.lexmark.co.uk



HP Photosmart A526



£50 inc VAT

From www.dixons.co.uk

Despite being one of the cheapest compact photo printers we've ever reviewed, HP's Photosmart A526 still has a colour screen and support for direct printing from memory cards and digital cameras with PictBridge support. It doesn't have as many extra composition and editing features as some of the more expensive printers here, but it's easy to use. With an integrated handle, it is designed to be portable, but there's no battery pack available, so you can use it only if you have access to the mains.

The printer opens to reveal a rear paper tray that can take up to 20 6x4in sheets at the back, and an output tray, memory card slots and access to the ink cartridge at the front. Most configuration and quality settings menus aren't available once you've inserted a memory card, so you'll need to set up options such as borderless printing and Photo Fix image enhancement beforehand. These settings can be switched on or off but there are no options to fine-tune them, and only red-eye correction is available when browsing photos. For multiple copies, you press the print button repeatedly.

It can print at its maximum resolution of 4,800x1,200dpi only when connected to a PC. Direct printing from a memory card is limited to the Best quality setting of 1,200x1,200dpi. Inkjet prints are more likely to be grainy than those produced by dye-sub printers, but this wasn't a visible problem with most photos. Prints were usually sharp and clear, and only our picture of a blue sky suffered from a slightly speckled effect. Colours were bright and accurate, although some detail was lost in dark, low-contrast images. You can buy a multipack containing consumables to print 120 photos for around £21, which means each photo costs 17½p to print. The A526 was the second-slowest in the group, taking 14 minutes and 25 seconds to print six 6x4in snaps.

Although this is one of the slowest printers in the group, it's also very affordable to buy and easy to use.

SUMMARY

- ☒ Inexpensive
- ☒ Good image quality
- ☒ Few direct printing image-editing options

THREE-COLOUR INKJET COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER
6x4in photo support, 4,800x1,200dpi maximum resolution, USB Hi-Speed, PictBridge USB interfaces, CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick/Pro, SmartMedia, xD memory card support
PART CODE Q8531A
DETAILS www.hp.co.uk



EPSON PictureMate 240



£70 inc VAT

From www.buyepson.co.uk



We first reviewed Epson's PictureMate 240 in *Shopper* 228, when it received five stars and our Best Buy award. Since then, its price has dropped by over £40, making it even better value. Print costs are also affordable at 16.6p a photo from a £25 ink and paper pack.

The PictureMate 240 has a combined four-colour ink cartridge. Most of the printers here, inkjet and dye-sub, use only three colours and create black by combining them. The addition of black ink means dark backgrounds and black-and-white photos have better contrast than those produced by most of the other printers here. Colour reproduction was rich and vivid, and the accurate, natural-looking skin tones were among the best here.

The PictureMate 240 looks more like a car battery than a printer, and is heavier than ultra-compact printers such as HP's Photosmart A526. It's unlikely to win any awards for style, but it feels sturdier than most, with a lid that folds down to protect a 2.5in screen. Its boxy shape leaves room for an optional rechargeable battery pack, which means you can use it on the move if you don't mind lugging it around.

There are plenty of options available if you want to print directly from a memory card. A display button allows you to switch between viewing groups of thumbnail images or larger previews of individual photos. The menu system is easy to use. A few editing options let you add frames and colourful clip art.

The 240 is fairly slow at the default image-quality setting, taking 10 minutes and 22 seconds to print six photos, but they looked great. The best quality is only available when printing from a PC, by selecting Enhance Fine Detail. In this mode, photos took over twice as long to print, but their quality was outstanding.

The PictureMate 240 may well have been around longer than other printers, but its great quality and low price make it our Best Buy once again.

SUMMARY

- ☒ Excellent image quality
- ☒ Inexpensive
- ☒ Dedicated black ink gives more accurate colours

FOUR-COLOUR INKJET COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER
6x4in photo support, 5,760x1,440dpi maximum resolution, USB Hi-Speed, PictBridge USB interfaces, CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick/Pro, MicroDrive, xD memory card support
PART CODE C11C660004
DETAILS www.epson.co.uk



KODAK EasyShare G610

★★★★

£95 inc VAT

From www.morecomputers.co.uk

The cheapest dye-sub printer in the group is also the most basic. Kodak's EasyShare G610 can print from your PC or be docked with many of Kodak's EasyShare digital cameras, or other manufacturers' cameras that support the ImageLink system. When docked, you can use the camera's screen to select and preview shots before you print, and the G610 can recharge the batteries of most compatible cameras.

Without a camera, the G610 has limited features, lacking a screen, memory card slots and a PictBridge port. There's little to configure, whether printing from a camera or a PC, but the manual doesn't include enough detail on positioning the paper tray correctly. The ends of its clear plastic cover have to rest on two small ledges at the front of the printer to prevent multiple sheets being drawn in.

The G610 was one of the fastest printers in the group, printing six 6x4in photos in six minutes and 28 seconds. We were pleased with its smooth prints and warm colours, and particularly by its solid reproduction of dark tones in images dominated by shades of grey, black and brown. Black-and-white photos had clear, precise shading, although they were a little pale. Brighter colours looked natural, and the smooth shading of clear blue sky was the best we've seen from a dye-sub printer. Sadly, a magenta tint was visible on pale areas, particularly white backgrounds. Consumable packs containing a cartridge and enough paper to print 200 photos cost around £40, which means your prints will cost 20p each.

The G610 is one of the most basic printers here, and the only one without a screen. Even if you use it with a compatible camera, its direct printing options are limited to basic cropping and red-eye removal. Without a camera that supports Kodak's ImageLink system, your only option is to print from a PC. We liked its warm photos and clear printing of dark images, and were particularly impressed by the quality of its shading, but the G610 simply does not offer enough for this price.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Excellent low-contrast image prints
- ✗ No screen
- ✗ No PictBridge or memory card support

DYE-SUBLIMATION COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER 6x4in photo support, 300x300dpi maximum resolution, USB Hi-Speed, Kodak ImageLink print system interfaces, no memory card support
PART CODE 8811507
DETAILS www.kodak.co.uk



SONY DPP-FP70

★★★★

£100 inc VAT

From www.purelygadgets.co.uk

Sony's DPP-FP70 is an affordable dye-sub printer with plenty of features. Memory card slots, a PictBridge port and a selection of image-editing tools make it a versatile choice for direct printing. The printer was incredibly easy to use, whether printing directly from a memory card or from a PC. Its Windows driver was easy to install, although the printer didn't appear in our print options until we connected it for the first time after installation.

Its direct printing interface is excellent, and it supports SD, CompactFlash and Memory Stick Pro and Duo formats. XD cards aren't supported, which is a shame as they're common in Olympus and Fujifilm cameras. A well-designed menu system provides access to some creative printing options, letting you alter the colour balance, create personalised calendars and superimpose images on top of one another.

The DPP-FP70 is very portable, with a plastic handle that makes it look like an old transistor radio. No battery is available, so you're dependent on mains power, which limits your options if you want to use it when you're out and about. The 2.5in screen is clear and bright, although some of the creative printing options would benefit from a larger display.

The printer was the second-fastest in the group, taking five minutes and 17 seconds to print six photos. We were generally happy with the quality of our prints, which accurately reproduced pale colours and flesh tones. Brighter shades didn't look entirely natural, but we liked their vivid appearance. Although they suffered from an indigo tint, black tones and colours in shady areas were more vibrant than those produced by most dye-sub printers here, although the grey and brown tones in our low-contrast test image still looked rather flat.

The DPP-FP70 is a great choice for photos that stand up to close examination. However, we prefer Sony's DPP-FP90 for its larger screen size, and the FP70's overall print quality wasn't quite up to that of the best inkjets.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Good image quality
- ✓ Clear interface
- ✗ Poor detail on low-contrast snaps; no xD support

DYE-SUBLIMATION COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER 6x4in photo support, 300x300dpi maximum resolution, USB, PictBridge USB interfaces, CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick/Duo, MicroDrive memory card support
PART CODE DPPFP70
DETAILS www.sony.co.uk



CANON Selphy ES2

★★★

£125 inc VAT

From www.digital-cameras.com

Canon's Selphy ES2 is the most expensive dye-sub printer here. Paper and ink are cleverly contained in a single cartridge, with both tri-colour and black and white versions available.

Despite this seemingly simple configuration, the paper takes a meandering path in and out of the printer as it's first pulled out of the cartridge in landscape orientation, then flipped into portrait mode at the front of the printer before making its way in and out of the machine over the course of the four-pass printing process. The route taken by the paper isn't the only complex element to this printer. A surprisingly large number of buttons surround the 3in LCD screen. These control a fairly typical range of editing and creative options, which would have made more sense in a conventional menu system.

Some of the more effective features include a scroll wheel, which can be used to resize the selected area when cropping photos, and a few picture effects we haven't seen elsewhere, such as faded edges and a starburst filter, while an optional battery pack adds portability. The PC driver, while simple, includes image adjustment and colour-balancing effects that will be familiar if you've used Canon's full-sized inkjets, although it's not possible to save colour profiles.

The ES2 printed six photos in eight minutes, which compares well with the other printers here. Unfortunately, this quirky printer failed to impress when it came to quality. Our photos looked acceptable in isolation, but didn't compare well to pictures produced by other printers in the group. Typically for a dye-sub printer, small, complex details were reproduced with great accuracy, but we were surprised by the poor rendition of shading, while dark and low-contrast images looked flat and dull. This counts against the ES2, along with its lack of support for xD cards, complicated interface and high price.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Lots of features
- ✗ Complicated interface
- ✗ Poor detail on dark images; no xD card support

DYE-SUBLIMATION COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER 6x4in photo support, 300x600dpi maximum resolution, USB Hi-Speed, PictBridge USB, IrDA infrared interfaces, CompactFlash, Secure Digital, Secure Digital High Capacity, MultiMedia Card, HDMC, MMCPlus, Memory Stick/Pro/Duo memory card support
PART CODE 2096B008AA
DETAILS www.canon.co.uk



SONY DPP-FP90

★★★★

£130 inc VAT

From www.purelygadgets.co.uk

Sony's dye-sub DPP-FP90 is similar to the cheaper DPP-FP70, with one notable exception: this has a larger screen, measuring 3.6in, compared to the DPP-FP70's 2.5in display. This is an advantage for using the range of built-in image customisation options to alter photos saved on a memory card.

You can't make major changes to your photos, but you can alter their colour balance, print multiple images on a single 6x4in sheet, create calendars or choose from a number of default captions. These creative activities are good fun, and you can save the results as a new file on the memory card.

The DPP-FP90 costs £30 more than the DPP-FP70, but the only difference between the printers is in their screen size. The large screen can be tilted into a variety of display positions, which makes the most of the printer's slideshow feature and also makes it easier to view your photos before you print.

The DPP-FP90 produced high-quality photos with very smooth shading, bright, vivid colours and accurate pale shades. However, low-contrast images with a lot of dark tones looked flat, and some large areas of subtle shading weren't as smooth as we'd have liked. Black-and-white photos looked striking, but darker shades of grey blended into each other, making it hard to distinguish some details. The DPP-FP90's photos look identical and print in almost the same amount of time as the DPP-FP70's, making it one of the fastest printers here.

This is the best of the dye-sub printers in the group for overall image quality and, thanks to its large screen, ease of use. We liked the creative printing options, while photos looked good and stood up to close examination. However, pictures didn't look quite as sharp and bright as those that we got from Epson's PictureMate 240 inkjet, which is £60 cheaper, and HP's A826 is only £8 more and can print 7x5in photos. Ultimately, there aren't enough reasons to buy the DPP-FP90.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Good image quality; large screen
- ✓ Clear interface
- ✗ Poor detail on dark images; no xD card support

DYE-SUBLIMATION COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER 6x4in photo support, 300x300dpi maximum resolution, USB, PictBridge USB interfaces, CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick/Duo, Microdrive memory card support

PART CODE DPPFP90

DETAILS www.sony.co.uk



HP Photosmart A826

★★★★★

£138 inc VAT

From www.micom.co.uk

HP's Photosmart A826 home photo centre is bulky, but has some unique features. It's the only printer here to print 7x5in photos. Although it's an inkjet rather than a dye-sub printer, even large photos showed virtually no trace of graininess. 6x4in print costs are fairly low, with a £21 photo value pack producing 120 prints at 17.5p each. The 7x5in HP 343 packs produce 60 prints at a print cost of 30.2p per photo.

The A826's 7in touch screen is the largest here and is ideal for viewing and printing images directly from a memory card. As well as the usual cropping, brightness adjustment and red-eye removal features, you can add drawings and enter your own captions onscreen.

The A826 was easy to use thanks to animated onscreen instructions showing you how to perform tasks such as loading ink and paper. The paper tray is conveniently concealed at the back of the printer, but felt flimsy and was prone to sticking. Driver installation was also simple, if slow. The maximum resolution of 4,800x1,200dpi is available only when you print directly from a PC, with direct printing limited to 1,200x1,200dpi. Luckily, the lower-resolution photos still looked good, and direct printing often gave us more accurate cropping and positioning of our images on the page. Printing is slow, though, taking 18 minutes and 15 seconds to print six 6x4in photos and over 19 minutes for six 7x5in photos.

Photos looked almost identical to those printed by HP's Photosmart A526. Colours looked bright and attractive, although some skin tones looked slightly yellow in side-by-side comparisons with prints from the other printers.

HP's Photosmart A826 is fun to use, and a great choice if your family prints a lot of photos straight from a memory card. The ability to print 7x5in photos is also a bonus. Its image quality is no better than Epson's PictureMate 240, though, so unless you want to print large photos you should buy the cheaper printer.

SUMMARY

- ✓ 7x5in printing; lots of features
- ✓ Large screen
- ✗ Fairly expensive

THREE-COLOUR INKJET COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER

7x5in photo support, 6x4in photo support, 4,800x1,200dpi maximum resolution, USB Hi-Speed, PictBridge USB interfaces, CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick/Pro, SmartMedia, xD memory card support

PART CODE Q8550A

DETAILS www.hp.co.uk



EPSON PictureMate 290

★★★★

£176 inc VAT

From www.lambda-tek.com/componentshop

Epson's PictureMate 290 might cost a lot but it does more than other photo printers. It's the only printer here with an integrated CD/DVD writer, so you can back up photos from memory cards to discs. It has built-in Bluetooth so you can print wirelessly from a camera phone, and an optional battery pack lets you print on the move.

We were disappointed by the quality of the prints, though. When printing from a PC, the printer has a maximum resolution of 5,760x1,440dpi, but the highest-quality prints can be achieved only when the Enhance Fine Detail box has been ticked. Some photos looked great, particularly high-contrast images with bright colours and dark backgrounds, but the printer had difficulty reproducing delicate shading. This was visible in subtle transitions of colour in a blue sky, which looked jagged and grainy with visible pixels. Dark, muted tones had a cyan tint, and black-and-white images suffered the same problem unless we put the printer into black-and-white mode first.

These flaws were particularly noticeable when compared to prints made by Epson's older PictureMate 240. Individually, none of these would be a major problem, but the overall picture quality was inferior to that of some of the cheapest printers in the group.

The PictureMate 290 takes one combined ink cartridge, which uses four colours. The addition of black ink produced excellent quality and depth in dark areas. You can get 150-sheet ink and paper packs for around £25, resulting in a print cost of 16.6p per photo.

We were expecting great results from the most expensive printer in the group, but while Epson's PictureMate 290 has loads of features and produced some good-quality photos, some of its prints contained flaws and problem areas that the lower-cost printers here managed to avoid. It failed to live up to the results we saw from its predecessor, the PictureMate 240.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Dedicated black ink gives more accurate colours
- ✗ Flawed printing of shading and dark images
- ✗ Expensive

FOUR-COLOUR INKJET COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER

6x4in photo support, 5,760x1,440dpi maximum resolution, USB Hi-Speed, PictBridge USB interfaces, CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick/Pro, SmartMedia, MicroDrive, xD memory card support

PART CODE C11C69530

DETAILS www.epson.co.uk



★ BEST BUY									
MANUFACTURER	LEXMARK	HP	EPSON	KODAK	SONY	CANON	SONY	HP	EPSON
Model	P350	Photosmart A526	PictureMate 240	EasyShare G610	DPP-FP70	Selphy ES2	DPP-FP90	Photosmart A826	PictureMate 290
Rating	★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★
6x4in photo support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7x5in photo support	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
QUOTED SPEEDS									
Time to print one photo	1m 15s	39s	42s	1m 0s	45s	1m 9s	45s	39s	37s
TESTED SPEEDS									
Test 1 (six 6x4in photos)	10m 14s	14m 25s	10m 22s	6m 28s	5m 17s	8m 1s	5m 15s	18m 15s	10m 2s
Test 2 (six 7x5in photos)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	19m 30s	N/A
PRINT QUALITY									
Maximum direct connect resolution	4,800x1,200dpi	4,800x1,200dpi	5,760x1,440dpi	300x300dpi	300x300dpi	300x600dpi	300x300dpi	4,800x1,200dpi	5,760x1,440dpi
Maximum direct print resolution	4,800x1,200dpi	1,200x1,200dpi	5,760x1,440dpi	300x300dpi	300x300dpi	300x600dpi	300x300dpi	1,200x1,200dpi	5,760x1,440dpi
Number of colours (cartridges)	3 (1)	3 (1)	4 (1)	3 (1)	3 (1)	3 (1)	3 (1)	3 (1)	4 (1)
Quoted photo durability (source)	100 years (Lexmark)	105 years (Wilhelm Imaging Research)	96 years (Wilhelm Imaging Research)	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	100 years (Canon)	Not disclosed	105 years (Wilhelm Imaging Research)	96 years (Wilhelm Imaging Research)
PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL									
Standard interfaces	USB Hi-Speed, PictBridge USB	USB Hi-Speed, PictBridge USB	USB Hi-Speed, PictBridge USB	USB Hi-Speed, Kodak ImageLink print system	USB, PictBridge USB	USB Hi-Speed, PictBridge USB, IrDA infrared	USB, PictBridge USB	USB Hi-Speed, PictBridge USB	USB Hi-Speed, PictBridge USB
Memory card support	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro, xD	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick/Pro, SmartMedia, xD	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick/Pro, MicroDrive, xD	None	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick/Duo, MicroDrive	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, High Capacity, MultiMedia Card, HDMMC, MMCPlus, Memory Stick/Pro/Duo	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick/Duo, MicroDrive	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick/Pro, SmartMedia, xD	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick/Pro, SmartMedia, MicroDrive, xD
Dimensions (HxWxD)	127x235x225mm	137x227x116mm	215x339x262mm	95x198x228mm	70x185x330mm	190x213x131mm	70x185x330mm	275x263x350mm	301x245x305mm
Weight	1.8kg	1.2kg	1.5kg	1.9kg	1.1kg	2.0kg	1.2kg	2.6kg	3kg
Noise	44dB(A)	52dB(A)	Not disclosed	54dB(A)	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	55dB(A)	Not disclosed
Power consumption printing	Not disclosed	23W maximum	19W	52.8W	80W maximum	70W average	Not disclosed	16W maximum	13W average
Power consumption sleep mode	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	4W	Not disclosed	1W	4W	1W	4W	4W
PAPER HANDLING									
Maximum paper size	Panorama	Panorama	Panorama	6x4in	6x4in	6x4in	6x4in	5x7in, panorama	Panorama
Maximum paper weight	240gsm	280gsm	255gsm	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	280gsm	300gsm
Standard paper trays (capacity)	1 (25)	1 (20)	1 (20)	1 (30)	1 (20)	1 (50)	1 (20)	1 (100)	1 (20)
PHOTO FEATURES									
Exif support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PictBridge support	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Borderless printing	A6, Hagaki, 6x4in, L, panorama	6x4in, panorama	6x4in, panorama	6x4in	6x4in	6x4in, 119x89mm, credit card	6x4in	4x6in, 13x18cm, panorama, credit card	6x4in, panorama
Direct (PC-less) printing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
GENERAL									
Technology	Thermal inkjet	Thermal inkjet	Piezo inkjet	CMYO dye-sub	CMYO dye-sub	CMYO dye-sub	CMYO dye-sub	Thermal inkjet	Piezo inkjet
Supported operating systems	Windows 95/98/Me/2000/XP/Vista, Mac OS X 10.3 or later	Windows XP/Vista, Mac OS X 10.4	Windows 98/2000/XP/Vista, Mac OS X 10.2.8 or later	Windows 2000/XP/Vista, Mac OS X 10.3 or later	Windows 2000/XP/Vista	Windows 2000/XP/Vista, MacOS X 10.3 – 10.4	Windows 2000/XP/Vista	Windows XP/Vista, Mac OS X 10.3	Windows 2000/XP/Vista, Mac OS X 10.2.9 – 10.3.9 or later
Other features	2.4in colour screen	2.4in colour screen, automatic head alignment	2.5in colour screen	None	2.5in colour screen	3in colour screen	3.6in colour screen	7.0in colour touchscreen, automatic head alignment	3.6in colour screen, Bluetooth, CD-RW/DVD-ROM
Other options	None	Warranty extension to three years (UG185E), £22, carrying case (CC698A), £18	Battery (C12C831082), £69, Bluetooth adaptor (C12C824383), £32	None	None	Battery (NB-ES1L), £55, Bluetooth adaptor (BU-20), £40	None	Warranty extension to three years (UG060E), £39, Bluetooth adaptor (Q6273A), £25	Battery (C12C831083), £68
BUYING INFORMATION									
Price including VAT	£48	£50	£70	£95	£100	£125	£130	£138	£176
Quoted life of supplied photo media	Not disclosed	10 6x4in photos (three-ink)	20 6x4in photos (four-ink)	Five 6x4in photos (three-ink)	None	10 6x4in photos (three-ink)	None	10 6x4in photos (three-ink)	20 6x4in photos (four-ink)
Cost per 6x4in photo including VAT	20p	17.5p	16.6p	20p	20p	20p	20p	17.5p	16.6p
Cost per 7x5in photo including VAT	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	30.2p	N/A
Warranty duration and terms	One year RTB	One year RTB	One year RTB	One year RTB	One year RTB	One year RTB	One year RTB	One year RTB	One year RTB
Supplier	www.ameiva.co.uk	www.dixons.co.uk	www.buyepson.co.uk	www.morecomputers.co.uk	www.purelygadgets.co.uk	www.digitalcameras.com	www.purelygadgets.co.uk	www.micom.co.uk	www.lambda-tek.com/componentshop
Details	www.lexmark.co.uk	www.hp.co.uk	www.epson.co.uk	www.kodak.co.uk	www.sony.co.uk	www.canon.co.uk	www.sony.co.uk	www.hp.co.uk	www.epson.co.uk
Part code	0022W0002	Q8531A	C11C660004	8811507	DPPFP70	2096B008AA	DPPFP90	Q8550A	C11C69530

Labs verdict Mini photo printers

Most printers in the group produced good-quality photos that we'd be happy to display at home and made it easy to print photos from a PC, a memory card or direct from a digital camera.

The inkjet printers were generally the best when it came to printing bright, sharp photos that would look great in a frame, but if you want the best-possible photo quality, you'll need a dye-sub printer. Sony's

DPP-FP90 is a good all-round printer and our favourite dye-sub in the group, but it's expensive.

Some of the printers had interesting features, such as the HP Photosmart A826's ability to print high-quality 7x5in photos, and the CD backup and wireless Bluetooth printing abilities of Epson's PictureMate 290. However, the winner is Epson's PictureMate 240, which retains its Best Buy award. This inkjet is



EPSON
PictureMate 240
★★★★★



cheap to buy, produced great-looking photos and is one of the few printers here that can be truly portable thanks to an optional battery pack. It's still our favourite compact photo printer. **ES**